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It is not always possible to congratulate Miss Foxcroft on the easy flow of her narrative ; she has a proneness to italics which is irritating, and adds no strength to her writing. Many of the footnotes are trivial, and many others could with advantage have been embodied in the text ; and while there is an index so full and complete that it extends over forty pages, a bibliography is lacking. To students, however, these are minor drawbacks, excepting perhaps the absence of a bibliography ; and they do not to any appreciable extent reduce the indebtedness students are under to Miss Foxcroft for a biography and a collection of letters and political tracts, which will always rank among the most serviceable books of the Revolution period, and demand a place alongside the best of those drawn upon in her work.

EDWARD PORRITT.

Introduction à l'Histoire Littéraire. Par P. LACOMBE, Inspecteur Général des Bibliothèques et des Archives. (Paris: Hachette. 1898. Pp. viii, 420.)

THIS book is a collection of essays on certain aspects of French literature and of French literary criticism rather than a comprehensive view of the study of literature in general. The author himself, to be sure, is convinced that, as Aristotle based his system of *poetics* exclusively upon a consideration of Greek poetry, so the modern science of literature might be based, to a large extent at least, upon the accurate study of the literature of a single people. Or, to quote a comparison used by M. Lacombe himself, as the physicist is assured that an apple falls vertically to the ground in an unexplored country no less than in his own garden, so he, without having studied Arab, Chinese or Hindu literature, feels nevertheless assured that these literatures are governed essentially by the same laws of thought and expression as the literature of his own native country. Without entering here upon the question whether this comparison does not disclose a somewhat mechanical conception of literary problems, one cannot help regretting that a critic of such rare acumen and originality as M. Lacombe should not have extended his observation to wider fields ; that he should not have attempted a comparative study of at least the principal literatures of ancient and modern Europe. A book which fails to bring before us at least the general trend of the literary development of the great nations of the world's history, can hardly be called an introduction to the study of literature.

Within the limits set to it by the author's fundamental self-restriction, the book contains a great variety of keen reflections and brilliant suggestions. It is essentially the work of a thinker ; and in these days when the domain of literary investigation is well-nigh monopolized by the compilers, it is a genuine pleasure to meet a man who is earnestly in search of first principles. The contrast between this book of M. Lacombe's and a recent German production of a similar scope, Professor Elster's *Prinzipien der Literaturwissenschaft*, is indeed striking. While

Elster's work impresses one as a scrap-book of a vast amount of detached facts and isolated theories, Lacombe's one aim appears to be to reduce a limited number of observations to a rational whole.

Truly delightful reading is the chapter devoted to the psychological analysis of the artistic temper, the unravelling of the mysterious threads that connect the artist's work with his own personality, from the instinctive impulse for production to the conscious striving for definite effects, from unquestioning acceptance of the common modes of thought and feeling to uncompromising assertion of the artistic self. Masterly is the logical analysis of the complexity of causes that produce a given literary phenomenon such as the growth and decay of certain branches of poetry, of certain intellectual and emotional movements; and equally masterly is the way in which this analysis is applied to concrete historical examples, as for instance the development of classical French tragedy. Penetrating and true is the criticism of Taine's failure to explain the relation of the individual to the surrounding *milieu*, of Brunetière's brilliant but futile play with general terms such as *esprit anglais* or *moyen âge*. And full of significance is M. Lacombe's conception of the individual as "un événement qui porte en lui des traces d'institutions antérieures et qui est le point de départ d'institutions subséquentes." It is a pity that the author should not have made this conception the guiding principle of his discussion of literary progress. By tracing in detail the line of development formed by the constant interweaving of individual with institutional forces he would have deepened our insight into the causes that control the growth of a given literature a great deal more than by his interesting attempt to demonstrate the tendency of advancing civilization to increase the mastery over literary form and to heighten the capacity for poetic representation of a complex inner life.

Perhaps the most felicitous part of the whole book consists in the numerous characterizations of individual authors such as Racine, Rousseau, Voltaire, Byron, Chateaubriand, Hugo, Renan, every one of these sketches being used as illustration of some general principle. The very quality which seems to debar M. Lacombe from divinatory appreciation of poetry—his intensely analytic and rational temper—makes him a most fair-minded and unprejudiced interpreter of human nature.

KUNO FRANCKE.

La Philosophie Sociale du XVIII^e Siècle et la Révolution. Par ALFRED ESPINAS, Professor à l'Université de Bordeaux. (Paris: Félix Alcan. 1898. Pp. 413.)

THIS is a volume of lectures, several of them the opening lectures of annual courses delivered at Paris under the auspices of the Faculty of Letters. The author gives them in their original form, even to the extent of preserving the polite "Messieurs" at the outset of each. One feels hesitant in offering a critical judgment of them, conscious that in those to which they served as an introduction the positions here defended